The next item that may perhaps require a word of explanation is the increased provision under 'Cost of medicines'. As explained in the Memorandum, out of the provision of Rs. 95,000 under this head, a sum of Rs. 75,000 is towards the purchase of medicines for the current year and the balance of Rs. 20,000 is for part payment of the liabilities of the previous years, which approximately come to Rs. 45,000. I hope that the House will unanimously agree with me that it will be far better to start afresh with a clean slate after wiping off the liabilities, so that the medicines for one year may in future, be purchased with the allotment for that year. If it is asked why then only a part payment is provided for next year, I may state for the information of the House that, in the opinion of the Government, it seems it would be better to spread the payment of the liability over two years so that the budget may be balanced in a way without having the expenditure swelled in any one particular year.

An increased provision of Rs. 75,000 is made under 'Cost of medicines' as against the revised estimate of Rs. 68,000, so that there may not be any paucity of supply. A provision of Rs. 4,200 has also been made for 7 rural dispensaries according to the new scheme. The provision of Rs. 30,000 under 'Dietary charges' repeats the revised estimate, and it is hoped it will be sufficient. Besides, we have made liberal provisions in the Public Works budget for various works relating to this department. With the increased provision for medicines, nursing staff, rural dispensaries and additional accommodation and comfort there can be no room for any criticism that the Government have been unmindful of the requirements of the department which looks to the needs of the suffering population.

Sanitation and Conservancy.—Another department that looks after the public health is 'Sanitation Department' and it has been supplied with the usual funds. A provision of Rs. 12,000 has been made for sanitary works in towns distributed equally among Kunnamkulam, Trichur, Chittur-Tattamangallam, Mattancheri, Ernakulam and Trippunittura. Consequent on the transfer of Water Supply works to the Panchayat Department, the post of a Draftsman in the department was abolished in the course of the year. The usual provision of Rs. 3,000 is made towards contribution to the Pulaya Colony which is proposed to be administered in future by the Protector of the Depressed Classes. It is the firm conviction of the Government that the Municipalities, having passed the infant stage when active help and guidance of the Government were necessary, should be able to stand on their own legs. Hence the decreased provision

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of Rs. 9,000 made under 'Contribution to Municipalities', of which a sum of Rs. 5,000 is for Chittur-Tattamangalam and the balance of Rs. 4,000 is distributed equally between Ernakulam and Trichur.

Public Works Department.—I now come to the Public Works Department which consists of Public Works 'Proper' or 'Civil Engineering' and 'Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.' Under 'Civil Engineering' we have provided a sum of Rs. 10,57,559 as against the revised estimate of Rs. 9,45,297 i. e., more than a lakh of rupees in excess, while 'Mechanical and Electrical Engineering' gets an allotment of Rs. 2,35,833. The increase under 'Civil Engineering' is chiefly due to the enhanced provisions under 'Communications' and 'Buildings.' The opening of the Cochin-Alleppy road, opening of a road to the Nelliampaties, opening of a road from Mala to Adur, construction of the Panamkutti bridge and another bridge north of Karuvannur are some of the major communication works proposed to be undertaken next year while on the building side, we have made provisions for the Leper Asylum building at Adur, for the construction of a paying ward in the General Hospital, construction of nurses' quarters, construction of a Commercial class in the G. T. School and also balance provisions for the construction of the G. T. School, Trichur and Girls' High School, Ernakulam, already going on. Coming to 'Irrigation', it may perhaps be adversely commented that we have only made less provision than that of the revised estimate when the cry everywhere is 'Irrigation, more irrigation and yet more irrigation', the budget estimate for 1103 coming only to Rs. 1,21,093 as against the revised estimate of Rs. 1,50,281. As already explained by me last year, Government fully recognise the primary importance of irrigation in an agricultural State like ours, and they are no whit behind any Member of this House in their desire for extending the facilities for irrigation. But it is their earnest desire to take stock of the present situation before they launch on any big schemes, to make a careful survey of the whole problem and lay out a programme of irrigation works which may be taken up year after year as funds permit. They propose to appoint a special Engineer for this purpose with the necessary staff, etc. Hence the provision of Rs. 16,000 for investigating irrigation projects now provided for. They have also made ample provision for the improvement of existing irrigation facilities.

Turning to 'Mechanical Engineering', I have nothing to remark, the details of the several provisions having already been worked out in the Appendix. Some of the costly works

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